

ITHACA SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
SUMMER 2024 AUDITION SIDES

Choose one character that you would like to read first. You can choose from any age, gender, etc.
You will probably be asked to read one or more other characters as well.
Sides do not need to be memorized.

CHARACTERS:

HELENA: A physician's daughter who is a skilled healer in her own right. She is in love with Bertram, who wants nothing to do with her. Respected by everyone except Bertram. She speaks humbly of herself but is bold and determined in going after what she wants.

BERTRAM: A young nobleman who is forced to marry Helena but has nothing but disdain for "a poor physician's daughter." After being forced to marry Helena, he runs away to the wars in Italy and begins trying to seduce a young woman there. He seems to be the only one who believes all of Paroles' boasts.

THE COUNTESS: A widow and Bertram's mother. She has raised Helena in her household, welcomes her as a daughter-in-law, and is horrified at Bertram's rejection of Helena. A strong woman who verbally parries with her fool Lavatch.

PAROLES: A flamboyant courtier who brags about being a great soldier but is later exposed as a coward. Immediately betrays his fellow soldiers when he thinks his own life is in danger. His name means "words" – ie, he's all talk.

KING OF FRANCE: Very ill at the beginning of the play and has given up hope, but is cured by Helena. He orders Bertram to marry her and is insulted by Bertram's resistance. Somewhat impulsive and impetuous, expects to just order people to do what he wants and have it turn out well.

LAFEU: An older courtier who recognizes Paroles as a liar and often comments on the behavior of the younger noblemen. Sometimes fiery, sometimes funny.

LAVATCH: The fool in the Countess' household. Like other Shakespearean fools, he uses wordplay, riddles, absurd exaggerations, etc, to expose the folly of others or of the world in general.

ITHACA SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
SUMMER 2024 AUDITION SIDES

Choose one character that you would like to read first. You can choose from any age, gender, etc.
You will probably be asked to read one or more other characters as well.
Sides do not need to be memorized.

HELENA (expressing her feelings about Bertram at the beginning of the play when he is getting ready to leave for the King's court)

I am undone; there is no living, none,
If Bertram be away. 'Twere all one
That I should love a bright particular star
And think to wed it, he is so above me.
In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.
'Twas pretty, though a plague,
To see him every hour; to sit and draw
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls
In our heart's table – heart too capable
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour.
But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy
Must sanctify his relics.

HELENA (after finding out that Bertram has run away to fight in the wars to get away from her)

Poor lord, is't I
That chase thee from thy country and expose
Those tender limbs of thine to the event
Of the none-sparing war? And is it I
That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou
Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark
Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers
That ride upon the violent speed of fire,
Fly with false aim; do not touch my lord.
Whoever shoots at him, I set him there;
Whoever charges on his forward breast,
I am the caitiff that do hold him to't.
No, come thou home, Roussillon;
I will be gone. Come, night; end, day!
For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away.

**ITHACA SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
SUMMER 2024 AUDITION SIDES**

Choose one character that you would like to read first. You can choose from any age, gender, etc.
You will probably be asked to read one or more other characters as well.
Sides do not need to be memorized.

BERTRAM (to the King, after being told that he must marry Helena)

My wife, my liege? I shall beseech your highness,
In such a business give me leave to use
The help of mine own eyes. I know her well;
She had her breeding at my father's charge.
A poor physician's daughter my wife? Disdain
Rather corrupt me ever!
I cannot love her, nor will strive to do't.

BERTRAM (trying to seduce Diana even though he's still married to Helena)

Be not so holy-cruel. Love is holy,
And my integrity ne'er knew the crafts
That you do charge men with. Stand no more off,
But give thyself unto my sick desires,
Who then recover. Say thou art mine, and ever
My love as it begins shall so persever.

ITHACA SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
SUMMER 2024 AUDITION SIDES

Choose one character that you would like to read first. You can choose from any age, gender, etc.
You will probably be asked to read one or more other characters as well.
Sides do not need to be memorized.

COUNTESS (to Helena, who has asked if there's a way the Countess can be her mother without Bertram being her brother)

Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-law.
What, pale again?
My fear hath caught your fondness. Now I see
The mystery of your loneliness, and find
Your salt tears' head. Now to all sense 'tis gross:
You love my son. Therefore tell me true,
But tell me then 'tis so – for look, thy cheeks
Confess it, th' one to th' other, and thine eyes
See it so grossly shown in thy behaviors
That in their kind they speak it. Speak, is't so?
If it be not, forswear't; howe'er, I charge thee,
As heaven shall work in me for thine avail,
To tell me truly. Do you love my son?

COUNTESS (to her steward, after learning that Bertram has run away to avoid Helena)

What angel shall
Bless this unworthy husband? He cannot thrive,
Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear
And loves to grant, reprieve him from the wrath
Of greatest justice. Write, write, Rinaldo,
To this unworthy husband of his wife;
Let every word weigh heavy of her worth
That he does weigh too light. My greatest grief,
Though little he do feel it, set down sharply.
My heart is heavy and mine age is weak;
Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak.

**ITHACA SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
SUMMER 2024 AUDITION SIDES**

Choose one character that you would like to read first. You can choose from any age, gender, etc.
You will probably be asked to read one or more other characters as well.
Sides do not need to be memorized.

PAROLLES (convincing Bertram to leave his marriage and go fight in the war in Italy)

France is a dog-hole, and it no more merits
The tread of a man's foot. To the wars!
He wears his honour in a box unseen
That hugs his kicky-wicky here at home,
Spending his manly marrow in her arms,
Which should sustain the bound and high curvet
Of Mars's fiery steed. To other regions!

PAROLLES (terrified after being “kidnapped” and blindfolded by the Dumaine brothers, who he thinks are the enemy)

I know this Captain Dumaine. He was a botcher's 'prentice in Paris. The duke knows him for no other but a poor officer of mine. He will lie, sir, with such volubility that you would think truth were a fool. Drunkenness is his best virtue, for he will be swine-drunk. He has every thing that an honest man should not have; what an honest man should have, he has nothing. As for his brother, he is e'en a crow o' the same nest: he excels his brother for a coward, yet his brother is reputed one of the best that is. In a retreat he outruns any lackey; marry, in coming on he has the cramp.

**ITHACA SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
SUMMER 2024 AUDITION SIDES**

Choose one character that you would like to read first. You can choose from any age, gender, etc.
You will probably be asked to read one or more other characters as well.
Sides do not need to be memorized.

KING (to Bertram, who has just said he won't marry Helena)

Take her hand,
Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift,
That dost in vile misprision shackle up
My love and her desert. Check thy contempt;
Obey our will, which travails in thy good.
Believe not thy disdain, but presently
Do thine own fortunes that obedient right
Which both thy duty owes and our power claims,
Or I will throw thee from my care forever
Into the staggers and the careless lapse
Of youth and ignorance, both my revenge and hate
Loosing upon thee, in the name of justice,
Without all terms of pity. Speak; thine answer.

LAFEU (calling out Paroles for his boasts and ostentatious outfits)

The devil it is that's thy master. Why dost thou garter up thy arms in this fashion? Dost make hose of sleeves? Do other servants so? Thou wert best set thy lower part where thy nose stands. By mine honour, if I were but two hours younger, I'd beat thee. Methinks thou art a general offence, and every man should beat thee; I think thou wast created for men to breathe themselves upon thee. You are not worth another word, else I'd call you knave. I leave you.

**ITHACA SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
SUMMER 2024 AUDITION SIDES**

Choose one character that you would like to read first. You can choose from any age, gender, etc.
You will probably be asked to read one or more other characters as well.
Sides do not need to be memorized.

LAVATCH (to the Countess, explaining why he wants to get married)

I am out o' friends, madam, and I hope to have friends for my wife's sake.
You think such friends would be mine enemies, but you are shallow, madam,
in great friends; for the knaves come to do that for me which I am weary of.
He that ploughs my land spares my team and gives me leave to reap the
crop; if I be his cuckold, he's my drudge. He that comforts my wife is the
cherisher of my flesh and blood; he that cherishes my flesh and blood loves
my flesh and blood; he that loves my flesh and blood is my friend; ergo, he
that kisses my wife is my friend. If men could be contented to be what they
are, there were no fear in marriage; for young Chairbonne the Puritan and
old Poisson the Papist, howsome'er their hearts are severed in religion, their
heads are both one; they may jowl horns together, like any deer in the herd.